

Heterotheca oregona (Nutt.) Shinnery

Oregon goldenaster
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

Status: State Threatened

Rank: G4S1

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1964): A perennial herb, subshrub, or shrub that often has several stems from a rather woody base and is 7¾ to 19½ in. (20 to 50 cm) tall. The herbage is sparsely covered with rough, stiff hairs or is sometimes nearly hairless. The stem is generally finely glandular as well. The lowermost leaves are reduced and deciduous. The other leaves are uniformly distributed along the stem, sessile, oblong to lanceolate, ¾ to 2 in. (2 to 5 cm) long, and ¼ to ½ in. (5 to 15 mm) wide. There are several heads, which lack ray flowers, in a more or less corymbiform inflorescence. Flowers are yellow. The involucre is ¼ to ½ in. (10 to 12 mm) high with bracts that overlap like roof shingles, are thin and transparent toward the margins, and gradually taper to a sharp point. The inside of the double pappus is covered with mostly unequal and often sordid bristles and the outer surface is covered with short coarse bristles or scales that are sometimes obscure. The achene is more or less flattened.

Identification Tips: *Heterotheca oregona* and *H. villosa* are the two species of *Heterotheca* in the Pacific Northwest. These two species can be distinguished by the nature of their heads and pappus. The heads of *H. oregona* lack ray flowers and its pappus is obscure. The heads of *H. villosa* have ray flowers and its pappus is evident.

Phenology: Identifiable June through September.

Range: This species is found from Washington to California. It is chiefly seen west of the Cascade Mountains but also occasionally along their eastern base. In Washington, it is known only from the eastern base of the Cascades.

Habitat: *Heterotheca oregona* grows on sand and gravel bars along rivers. In Washington, this species was found on a sandy riverbank at the edge of a Douglas fir-ponderosa pine (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*-*Pinus ponderosa*) forest at an elevation of 2600 ft (792 m).

Ecology: Seasonal river flooding is probably important in maintaining habitat for this species.

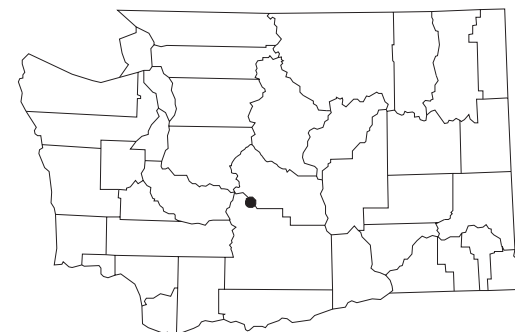
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Known distribution of
Heterotheca oregona
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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State Status Comments: The species is known from one large recent occurrence in Yakima County. Very little information is known about this species. The one population in Washington occurs within the Wenatchee National Forest.

Inventory Needs: Sand and gravel bars along rivers in Yakima County should be systematically surveyed for additional populations and information about both plants and habitat should be collected.

Threats and Management Concerns: Definite threats have not been identified for this species. However, the small range of this taxon in Washington and the small number of known occurrences are major concerns. Any disturbance to the immediate habitat, such as changes in hydrology and recreational activities, may constitute a threat.

Comments: Hitchcock et al. refer to this species as *Chrysopsis oregona*.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1964.
Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 5: Compositae.
University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 343 pp.